

**Blue Ribbon Panel Public Input Session  
Springfield  
April 28, 2003**

The Blue Ribbon Panel met at 4:00 p.m. on April 28, 2003, to hear testimony from the public pertaining to accountability, credibility, and efficiency of MoDOT and the Highways and Transportation Commission. Nine speakers made presentations. Their comments are summarized below:

**Cy Murray**

Director of Economic Development  
White River Electric

**Supported bike trails in Branson-Springfield area.**

Mr. Cy Murray presented two letters and a survey indicating support for bikeways in the Branson-Springfield area. *(These documents were given to MoDOT Chief Engineer Kevin Keith for response.)*

**Dave Rohling**

Springfield

**Encouraged MoDOT involvement in communities.**

Mr. Rohling said in 2002 he had participated in the Springfield area's efforts to endorse and solicit support for Proposition B, which would have increased revenue for transportation. As a result of that effort, he felt that Proposition B had failed because MoDOT had not communicated its mission to the public well enough to solicit support for custody of additional funds. He said having personally and professionally participated in the highway industry and having the occasion to interact with MoDOT staff over the past 25 years, he was aware of the complexity of the MoDOT's task and the professionalism of MoDOT's staff. Mr. Rohling said while not perfect, MoDOT possesses a wealth of experience, dedication, and proficiency.

Mr. Rohling said that in order to gain grassroots support for increased transportation funding, it would be necessary to engage the public. To do so, he recommended MoDOT's middle and higher management staff dedicate their time and contributions to their respective local communities to create an active network that affords the MoDOT staff the opportunity to sell themselves as proficient stewards and to communicate the challenges of providing transportation services.

Mr. Rohling said many people that he talked with during the Proposition B campaign made reference to occasions where they personally or as a community had interaction with MoDOT. He said those experiences left them feeling that they had been treated bureaucratically and indifferent. He said his experiences with MoDOT have been

otherwise; however, MoDOT must continually provide information pertaining to its management guidelines and constraints.

Mr. Rohling said the majority of the public was unaware of the scope and complexity of the highway and transportation system. He suggested that MoDOT (1) create a steady flow of information that is locally and regionally disseminated, (2) provide outreach to educate the public about MoDOT's role and tasks, and (3) become a public resource. He said relationships bring about successful results.

**Carol Cruise**

Senior Manager, Transit  
City Utilities  
1505 Boonville  
Springfield, MO 65803

**Solicit support from MoDOT employees and members of the General Assembly.  
Advocate other modes of transportation.**

Ms. Carol Cruise presented written comments, which are attached hereto. Her comments emphasized the need for MoDOT employees and members of the General Assembly to be advocates for MoDOT and Missouri's transportation programs. In order for that effort to be successful, Ms. Cruise noted that MoDOT must ensure that employee morale is positive and the members of the General Assembly have been provided information about transportation issues.

Ms. Cruise also encouraged MoDOT to demonstrate leadership in advocating other modes of transportation by setting standards and offering funding for communities that embrace alternative forms of transportation.

**Marc Thornsberry**, Public Works Director, Springfield  
**Kevin Lowe**, Highway Administrator Greene County

**Cooperative local area/MoDOT working relationship  
Communicate transportation challenges  
Local Funding Participation  
Improve MoDOT employee morale to allow them to speak with positive voice.**

Mr. Marc Thornsberry reported that the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Greene County, and the city of Springfield make an annual joint presentation to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. He shared the following information from the group's last presentation.

The Springfield/Greene County area has a growth rate (2.3%) that has been twice that of the rest of Missouri over the last ten-year period. Its economic output has doubled over

the past ten years, making it the fastest growing area in Missouri and in the top 50 nationally. Its workforce has exceeded 27% growth in the last ten years, and its economic influence covers 26 counties, with a population of almost 900,000.

Mr. Thornsberry said it was necessary to communicate the transportation challenges to stakeholders throughout the state. He noted that Missouri has over 123,000 miles of local and state roadways, making it the fifth largest transportation system in the nation. MoDOT is responsible for approximately 32,000 of those miles. Challenges also include Missouri's geology, number of major river crossings, and current funding. He noted that the national average of expenditure per mile on a state system is approximately \$73,000; MoDOT's average expenditure per mile is \$34,000, which is less than 50 percent of the national average.

Mr. Thornsberry felt that working together and increasing funding through local commitments should be expanded to all areas of Missouri. He noted that voter approval of local taxes for transportation has allowed the Springfield/Greene County area to commit \$20 million of local tax dollars toward improvements on the state system. Mr. Thornsberry suggested that when MoDOT's transportation values align with those of the local area, such as in their case, it creates increased opportunities for success.

Mr. Kevin Lowe suggested that MoDOT flexibility and empowerment of local districts to make decisions would be beneficial.

Mr. Thornsberry and Mr. Lowe stated their agreement with the comments made by Ms. Carol Cruise regarding the need to increase MoDOT employee morale so the employees can speak about MoDOT with a positive voice.

**Ray Jones**

Stone County Economic Development  
P.O. Box 400  
Galena, MO 65681

**Additional funding needed to take care of existing system  
and provide needed new facilities.**

Mr. Ray Jones said MoDOT has increased its accountability, credibility, and administrative efficiency in recent years. He said it is a challenge to maintain the existing highway system while attempting to improve and expand the system to meet the transportation needs of a growing population.

Mr. Jones recognized there were transportation needs throughout Missouri, but he reported that Stone County was one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri. In addition to the rapidly growing population, increased numbers of tourist travel to the area each year, further adding to the demand for improved highways. Mr. Jones said that many of the state roads in Stone County were designed and built many decades ago using

"lay of the land" engineering, which has resulting in extremely curvy, hilly, and narrow roads. He said while these roads were perhaps adequate for the population of the time, they are no longer adequate.

Mr. Jones reported that MoDOT had been working diligently to meet the area's needs, including building several miles of new roads and significantly upgrading portions of other roads in the county, all of which has been extremely helpful in reducing congestion and increasing traffic safety. He said, however, that additional improvements are needed to accommodate the rapidly growing residential population and arterial traffic. He stated that funding for adequate transportation improvements had not kept pace with the demands for new road construction and existing road maintenance.

Mr. Jones said that in order for MoDOT to be successful, Missouri voters must be willing to increase their investment in transportation.

**Bob Clark**

Mayor, City of Marshfield  
Webster County

**Commended MoDOT's funding allocation method  
Supported precise guidelines for project selection and prioritization.**

Mayor Bob Clark commended MoDOT for establishing a new funding formula, which he felt would provide a foundation for MoDOT's future credibility. He said the formula would allow both rural and urban areas to meet current and future transportation needs in a fair and precise manner. He felt that the new funding allocation method would be an example to other states.

Mayor Clark proposed that clear, precise statewide guidelines be developed for determining project selection and prioritization. He said the guidelines should eliminate political influence from project decision-making and allow the projects that are most critical to be completed first.

**Paul Ipcock**

Presiding Commissioner, Webster County

**Commended MoDOT.**

Mr. Paul Ipcock commended MoDOT for its efforts. He said that during the past four years, Webster County has developed a close working relationship with MoDOT and he expressed his appreciation.

**Basil Braden**

167 County Lane 34  
Sarcoxi, MO 64862

**Concern that MoDOT does not investigate alleged inappropriate acts by contractors.**

Mr. Basil Braden said he had been told of two incidents where a contractor did not perform work as required by MoDOT or had performed inappropriate acts. He said MoDOT staff had been advised of the incidents, but had not investigated them. He felt that such inaction by MDOT damages its credibility.

Mr. Braden said it was a general opinion that MoDOT had "sold out to the legislature" in 1991, and that MoDOT had gone down hill since that time.

*(MoDOT Director Henry Hungerbeeler and Chief Engineer Kevin Keith visited with Mr. Braden following his presentation and determined that the allegations made during his testimony had been investigated by MoDOT's Inspector General.)*



*Bringing Power Home.*

April 28, 2003

Blue Ribbon Panel on Accountability,  
Credibility, and Efficiency  
ATTN: Mari Ann Winters  
Secretary to the Missouri Highways and  
Transportation Commission  
105 W. Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 270  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Panel Members:

Thank you for your invitation to submit recommendations to enhance the accountability, credibility and efficiency of the state's transportation operations. I have three suggestions:

Employees are the heart and soul of any organization. MoDOT has an excellent resource in their employee pool. Their employees are numerous and spread throughout the entire state. It is vital that this group is supportive of MoDOT leadership. They each have neighbors, are involved in community activities such as school and church and have daily contact with others. If MoDOT employees believe in their organization, they can help in a grass roots effort to educate their communities. On the other hand, if morale is low, they can have a negative impact on the organization. An example is the outcome of Proposition B – when MoDOT employees vote against a ballot initiative that would benefit their department, I believe this should send a strong message. A true change in the department needs to begin from within the employee group.

Legislators can be another resource for MoDOT. There are many new faces in Jefferson City and now is a prime opportunity for MoDOT to garner support from the legislature. Just as in the past, many legislators shared a negative image with their constituents, if newly elected legislators are convinced that MoDOT is attempting to make positive changes, they can share this information with citizens in their area when holding town meetings, and help MoDOT change its public image.

Lastly, I would encourage the folks at MoDOT to demonstrate leadership in advocating other modes of transportation. We cannot "concrete" our way out of our transportation problems. Other modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, public transportation need to be encouraged and funded. Missouri is recognized as the 10<sup>th</sup> "fattest" state in the country and along with this dubious distinction, come a whole host of health issues, which in turn relate to increased medical costs. We should be patterning after other cities in the U.S. that are good models of "livable communities". These initiatives often begin at the local level, but the state should set the standard and offer funding for those communities that embrace alternative forms of transportation.

Respectfully,

Carol Cruise  
Senior Manager, Transit